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August 15, 2001

Henry Dean, Executive Director
South Florida Water Management District
3301 Gun Club Road
West Palm Beach, FL 33406

Subject: Support for Aquifer Storage and Recovery Projects, Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan

On behalf of Orlando Utilities Commission, I am writing this letter to express our support for the Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR) Projects associated with the Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP).

The failed ASR legislation from the 2001 Florida Legislative session resulted in much negative media coverage regarding the ASR technology. While the fate of microorganisms in aquifers – the subject of the failed ASR bill – requires further study, it appears that the potential benefits of ASR technology have been unfairly overlooked. For example, there does not appear to be another storage technology available that can provide multi-year storage to alleviate drought conditions, as experienced by Florida during the last year and a half. Additionally, since ASR technology is not subject to evapotranspiration or seepage losses and requires only an acre or two per ASR well system, it provides significant cost-effective benefits that complement traditional storage technologies such as reservoirs already proposed in CERP.

As presented at the August 2, 2001, Water Resource Advisory Commission meeting, implementation of the CERP ASR projects are proceeding in a slow, methodical manner to answer the many questions about applying this storage technology. I am aware that the current CERP ASR Program includes 333 ASR wells, and that nowhere in the world is ASR technology proposed at this scale. The ASR Issue Team and Committee for Restoration of the Greater Everglades Ecosystem (CROGEE) – both commissioned by the South Florida Ecosystem Restoration Task Force's Working Group – raised several technical issues that need to be addressed. The strategy of conducting ASR Pilot Projects at Lake Okeechobee, Caloosahatchee River, and Western Hillsboro Basin – combined with the ASR Regional Study to more fully evaluate the 333-well program and its effects on the environment and existing water users – appears to address these technical issues.

As a member of the Water Resource Advisory Commission to the South Florida Water Management District, I encourage you to continue your efforts with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to conduct the necessary data collection and scientific studies to truly evaluate the ASR technology for the benefit of Everglades Restoration as outlined in the CERP.

Sincerely,

Rick Coleman, P. E.
Director, Water Engineering &
Technical Services

08/15/01